

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 105 627

EA 007 063

AUTHOR Dunlap, Riley E.; Peck, Dennis L.
TITLE Student Activism: A Bibliography of Empirical
 Research. Exchange Bibliography No. 709.
INSTITUTION Council of Planning Librarians, Monticello, Ill.
PUB DATE Dec 74
NOTE 27p.
AVAILABLE FROM Council of Planning Librarians, P.O. Box 229,
 Monticello, Illinois 61857 (\$2.50)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.76 HC-\$1.95 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Activism; Behavioral Science Research;
 Bibliographies; *Civil Disobedience; Civil Liberties;
 Civil Rights; Class Attitudes; *College Students;
 Demonstrations (Civil); Educational Research; Higher
 Education; Minority Groups; Political Attitudes;
 Public Opinion; *Socioeconomic Influences;
 Socioeconomic Status; *Student Attitudes; Student
 Characteristics; Student Rights

ABSTRACT

This bibliography organizes the empirical research literature concerning student activism that was produced in the decade following the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. It is organized into eight sections. Section 1 focuses on studies of "radical" (leftist, antiestablishment) activists while Section 2 focuses on conservative student activists and Section 3 on black student protestors. Section 4 contains references to two types of studies--those concerned primarily with measuring the scope of student protest (what proportion of campuses experienced protest) and those concerned with relating the occurrence of protest to characteristics of institutions of higher education. The next three sections are concerned with studies of attitudes--student, faculty, and public--toward protest. The final section contains citations of reviews of the empirical literature. (Author/IRT)

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STUDENT ACTIVISM: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

There has been a great amount of research concerning student activism in the decade following the Berkeley Free Speech movement of 1964. This bibliography represents an attempt to organize the resulting literature into a meaningful and manageable framework. It contains references to "empirical" literature--i.e., papers and publications which present data relevant to student activism. It is organized into the eight sections noted in the "Table of Contents."

By way of introduction, we will briefly discuss the material in each section, summarizing key findings and pointing out trends in the evidence where relevant.

Section I focuses on studies of "radical" (i.e., leftist, anti-Establishment) activists. The fact that it contains nearly half of the entries in the bibliography reflects the intense interest which radical students have aroused among researchers as well as the public. There is also a noticeable trend in the research reported in this section. The "early" studies (from 1964 to approximately 1967) of radical activists painted a relatively consistent image of their subjects--in contrast to popular opinion radicals were generally found to be psychologically and morally "healthy," and intellectually and academically superior students. Further, they often came from families in which the parents tended to be quite politically liberal and democratic in their relations with their children (see, e.g., Flacks, 1967a; 1967b; Haan, et. al., 1969; Heist, 1965; Keniston, 1968, 1970; Smith, et. al., 1970). Consequently, rather than seen as rebelling against their parents, radical youth were viewed as simply living up to the humanistic and

egalitarian values into which they were socialized. However, efforts to live up to their ideals did bring them into conflict with the larger society which did not share their values. Their willingness to rebel against society was perhaps heightened by the fact that their parents tended to be upper-middle-class in socioeconomic status (often well-educated professionals). Thus, radical youth were able to experience the material comforts offered by an affluent society, and generally found them wanting (see, e.g., Braungart, 1966, 1971a; Flacks, 1967a, 1967b; Watts and Whittaker, 1966; Westby and Braungart, 1966).

As protest continued into the late Sixties, however, this image of radical student activists began to change. It was perhaps inevitable that as student protest spread from a few elite universities to a wide range of institutions, and appealed to a growing number of students at institutions of all types, that activists would be drawn from a more diverse set of backgrounds. The evidence suggests that this did in fact occur. Several studies of radicals in the late Sixties (many at non-elite universities) found them to have family backgrounds which were not that dissimilar to students in general (see, e.g., Clarke and Egan, 1972; Dunlap, 1970; Hayes, 1972; Kahn and Bowers, 1970; Rankoff and Flacks, 1971; Pugh, et. al., 1971). At the same time that studies were showing that radicals could not be easily distinguished from non-activists in terms of family SES, parents' politics, etc., a growing body of research was focusing on psychological and ideological differences between radicals and other students. Not surprisingly, as family

background variables became less important predictors of activism, researchers turned their attention from sociological to psychological and social-psychological variables, and began to explain activism in terms of political and social ideologies, social commitment, moral development, etc. (see, e.g., Blumenthal, 1973; Christie, et. al., 1969; Cryns and Finn, 1973; Lewis and Kraut, 1972; Miller and Eversen, 1970).

Another observation relevant to the above studies is also pertinent to the studies of "conservative" student activists presented in Section II. This is Kerpelman's (1969, 1972) contention that early studies of radical student activists confounded ideology with activism, and that some of the resulting conclusions apply to "activists" per se, not just "radical" (e.g., leftist) activists. While both Lacy (1971) and Rogers (1972) present additional evidence to support Kerpelman's position that activism (regardless of ideology) is associated with intelligence, political knowledge, academic ability, etc., this is an issue which deserves more investigation than it has received. Unfortunately, there have not been very many studies of conservative student activists--undoubtedly because they are fewer in number and less visible than their radical counterparts.

The majority of studies that have investigated conservative activists have compared them to samples of radical activists, and thus the bulk of Section II includes references to studies already listed in Section I. Available evidence on conservative activists suggests that they tend to closely follow their

parents' politics, receive parental approval for their political activities, and somewhat surprisingly, come from families lower in socioeconomic status than those of (at least the early) radical activists (see, e.g., Burns, et. al., 1972; Braungart, 1966, 1971a, 1971b; Dunlap, 1970; Miller and Everson, 1970).

Section III contains studies of Black student protestors. These studies have generally been neglected by analysis of white student activism, despite the fact that it was the Civil Rights Movement that played a key role in the early stages of protest among white students (e.g., at Berkeley). In general, the evidence on Black activists seems to agree with that on white activists, as the former were found to be from higher-than-average social class backgrounds and to be relatively good students (see, e.g., Matthews and Prothro, 1969; Orbell, 1967; Orum, 1973; Orum and Orum, 1968).

Section IV includes two related types of studies--those primarily concerned with measuring the "scope" of student protest (i.e., what proportion of campuses experienced protest) and those concerned with relating the occurrence of protest to characteristics of institutions of higher education. They are combined into a single category because there is considerable overlap between them--many studies of the scope of protest related occurrences of protest to campus characteristics.

This section includes a number of especially significant studies, because they deal directly with the fundamental issue of the cause of student protest. On the one hand, there are studies which appear to support the popular view that students

were protesting because of their dissatisfaction with large impersonal, bureaucratic "multiversities" (e.g., Ellis and Thompson, 1969; Scott and El Assal, 1969). While the evidence indicates that protests were more likely to occur at large multiversities, these studies neglected a large amount of evidence showing that protesting students indicated far greater concern with societal issues such as Civil Rights and Vietnam than they did with campus conditions such as large classes and impersonal bureaucracies (see, e.g., Dunlap, 1970; Keniston and Lerner, 1971). It seems evident that it was a concern with racism, the Vietnam war, poverty, etc. that was the primary motivation for the early campus disturbances, although eventually hostility was directed specifically at universities when they came to be viewed as guilty of complicity with the "military-industrial complex" (Dunlap, 1970).

This is not to deny that campus conditions played no role in the creation of protest. It seems probable that students would be more likely to protest if they were on a large, bureaucratic and impersonal campus where it was difficult to obtain a meaningful and personal response to their grievances (primarily about off-campus problems and the universities' failure to deal with the problems) from administrators. Further, the larger the student body, the more likely the presence of a "critical mass" of protest-oriented students needed to begin a demonstration (Blau and Slaughter, 1971). Yet, while recognizing that characteristics of the multiversity might have contributed indirectly to student protest, it is important to keep in mind that in most cases the original impetus to protest came from student dissatisfaction with societal conditions.

In Section V studies of student attitudes toward protest are presented. Such studies are often combined with the studies of radical activists in Section I, but should be separated--there is clearly a difference between expressing support for, or approval of, a campus demonstration on a survey (often taken after the demonstration has ended) and actually participating in such a demonstration. Thus, while the research in Section I focuses on "radicals" as defined by membership in a radical organization (e.g., SDS) or a behavioral act (e.g., taking part in a campus demonstration), the studies in Section V tend to classify students as "pro-" or "anti-" protest on the basis of questionnaire or interview responses. However, it is important to note that several studies (e.g., Gales, 1966; Somers, 1965) report that students who support or approve of campus demonstrations are similar to the "radicals" who actually participate in the demonstrations.

Section VI presents several studies of faculty attitudes toward student protest. In general, these studies show that young, liberal, untenured faculty in the humanities and social sciences were more likely than their counterparts to view protestors in a favorable light (see, e.g., Abramson and Wences, 1972; Cole and Adamsons, 1969, 1970).

The last group of empirical studies concerns public reaction to protest, and they are listed in Section VII. These studies show that a favorable (or less unfavorable) attitude toward protestors is more likely to be found among Blacks, the college educated, young adults, liberals and Democrats (see, e.g., Robinson, 1970; Spaeth, 1969).

Finally, for those who may find the amount of empirical material on student activism unwieldy, in Section VIII we have included a number of good reviews of the empirical literature. However, while the reviews give good coverage to the early work on activism, they naturally tend to slight the later work. Serious analysts will thus want to consult many of the original studies. The purpose of this introduction is, in part, to provide a quick guide to the literature by noting general trends and by citing specific examples of findings. An additional time-saving device is available in the form of the College Student Personnel Abstracts. We would estimate that approximately half of the studies listed in this bibliography have been abstracted in recent issues of CSPA.

We hope that this information will help make the research on student activism more accessible to interested scholars, for its' rise and decline is surely one of the most interesting phenomena in our nation's history.

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